

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



EDDIE RODRIGUEZ

FIFTY-FIRST DISTRICT

Item # 67

July 27, 2015

Austin City Council
P.O. Box 1088
Austin, Texas 78767

Dear Mayor Adler and Council Members,

I respectfully write in support of granting a Conditional Use Permit to Springdale Farm, which is located in my legislative district in east Austin.

As chair of the bipartisan Texas Farm-to-Table Caucus, I fight every session on behalf of our small urban and rural farmers. I founded the Caucus to focus on family food issues because we know they play an increasingly important role in some of the greatest challenges facing our state, including nutrition, hunger, childhood obesity and neighborhood economies.

Here in Austin, our local economy is thriving in large part because of our food sector, which accounts for more than \$4 billion in economic activity and the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. It is widely recognized that this sector is thriving because we were among the first farm-to-table movement cities.

But farms don't just supply our restaurants with locally grown, nutritious food. They are the source of our burgeoning farmers' market scene, partners with our local nonprofits and leaders in community outreach. Springdale alone hosted more than 1,500 schoolchildren last year, and the Foore family started the Springdale Center for Urban Agriculture in September 2014 to provide educational classes and tours for our students. In fact, they are currently in the process of raising funds to be able to host more schools for a waived fee.

You may already know Springdale is zoned for commercial use, and Council already has approved conditional uses on the farm. The list of compromises and concessions the Foore family has made to date is long. But granting a Conditional Use Permit to Springdale Farms is not about one farm or one permit; it's about the bigger decision to support and promote our urban farms.

I believe they have earned that support, and I will continue to fight for farms like Springdale at the Texas Legislature.

Regards,

Eddie Rodriguez
State Representative, HD 51